

County urges curbs on state inmate transfers

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By Abby Sewell

A multiple homicide outside a Northridge boarding-house has prompted Los Angeles County supervisors to call for legislation that would prevent state prisoners with a serious criminal history from being released to county supervision.

Realignment — intended to help the state meet a federal mandate to reduce its prison population — requires that some felons convicted of nonviolent offenses serve their time in county jails rather than state prison. It has also resulted in some inmates being released to county supervision instead of state parole.

Currently, only the offender's most recent crime is considered when determining who is eligible for realignment. Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky said Tuesday that he wants the county to pursue legislation that would require the offender's complete criminal past to be considered.

"It is a loophole big enough to drive a Sherman tank through," Yaroslavsky said of the current law.

Ka Pasaouk, a suspect in the killing of four people last week, was released to county probation after serving a prison sentence for unlawful taking of a vehicle. But his previous criminal history included a 2006 conviction for second-degree robbery and assault likely to produce great bodily injury.

While on probation, Pasaouk was arrested on suspicion of drug possession, and the Probation Department asked a judge to send him back to state prison. Instead, he was sent to a drug diversion program at the

recommendation of prosecutors who erroneously told the judge he was eligible for the program. He later failed to report to his probation officer.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said in a statement that the Northridge shootings "should not be used to perpetuate myths regarding realignment."

"Pasaouk would have been released from prison at the same time with or without realignment, whether or not he had a previous record of violent crime," the statement said. "...There should not be a difference in quality between state parole and county probation."

County Probation Chief Jerry Powers said that he did not believe the outcome would have been different if Pasaouk had been under parole supervision.

"The guy was an absconder. He had absconded on parole multiple times," he said.

Yaroslavsky acknowledged that he could not say with certainty that the killings would have been prevented had Pasaouk been under parole supervision.

But, he said, "my argument has been that the parole department of the state is far better trained and equipped and experienced in dealing with people who have committed serious crimes." Parole officers, for instance, carry guns, while probation officers in most cases do not.

The county supervisors also directed the Probation Department to prepare an in-depth report on Pasaouk's history and his interactions with agencies at all levels of government.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2012 AA5

CALIFORNIA BRIEFING

L.A. COUNTY

Sheriff's official to resign

A top Los Angeles County sheriff's official blamed for failing to raise alarms about deputy abuse of inmates will be resigning, a department spokesman confirmed Wednesday.

Earlier this year, a county commission created to examine abuse in the jails found that Assistant Sheriff Marvin Cavanaugh was among the top officials in the department who had failed to alert Sheriff Lee Baca about excessive force under their watch.

Cavanaugh oversaw the jails from 2007 through 2010, a period in which former department supervisors said the lockups were plagued by problems with deputy cliques and inmate abuse.

— ROBERT FATURECHI

LOS ANGELES

County jailer charged with assaulting inmates

After an internal investigation of its beleaguered jail system, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department arrested one of its own deputies on Thursday, saying he twice assaulted inmates and then falsified reports about the incidents.

Deputy Jermaine Jackson, 35, who for five years has worked as a jailer in the Twin Towers Correctional Facility, was taken into custody without incident at about 4:30 p.m., the Sheriff's Department said in a statement.

The district attorney has charged Jackson with four felony counts of assault under the color of authority and two misdemeanor counts of falsifying police reports.

One incident took place at the Compton courthouse lockup in December 2009, the other at the Twin Towers jail a year later, Sheriff Lee Baca's spokesman Steve Whitmore said. In both incidents, Jackson is accused of assaulting inmates with his feet, which are considered a deadly weapon.

Jackson was being held on \$100,000 bail in the same jail system in which he worked, and he has been relieved of duty without pay.

He has not entered a plea, and Whitmore did not know if he has hired an attorney.

— The Associated Press

Fri 12-14-12
Daily Breeze

CNN Hero Susan Burton Honored for Work with Former Incarcerated Women

By NICOLE WILLIAMS

Sentinel Contributing Writer

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"I was formerly incarcerated and when we walk out of a prison door, they say pull yourself up by your boot straps. Well damn, we don't have no boots, so how do you pull up something that ain't there," says CNN Hero Susan Burton at the 14th annual fundraising gala for her nonprofit A New Way of Life.

Those words would serve as motivational fuel for Burton, who started the non-profit that would change the lives of over 600 formerly incarcerated women. Burton's own experience with incarceration started with tragedy. She lost her 5-year old son, when he was hit and killed accidentally by a car. Grieving from the loss, she became addicted to drugs and alcohol and went to prison. When she was released from prison she soon realized that she had no support from her community of South L.A. After being given what Burton calls "boots" from two helpful women, she was able to "walk" on a new path of sobriety and freedom. She now works to give other formerly incarcerated women the "boots" they need to start their life over.

In support of A New Way of Life's efforts, the 14th annual fundraising gala titled, "Diamonds & Pearls: Beauty Through Adversity" was held at the Omni Hotel in Downtown LA Saturday evening. Celebrities came in support of New Way of Life such as actors and actresses, Wilmer Valderrama, Joe Torry, Lennie James, Steve Harris, Janina Gavankar, Tony Denison, Jason Isaacs and singer Michelle Delamot.

Harris attended the gala for the first time after becoming

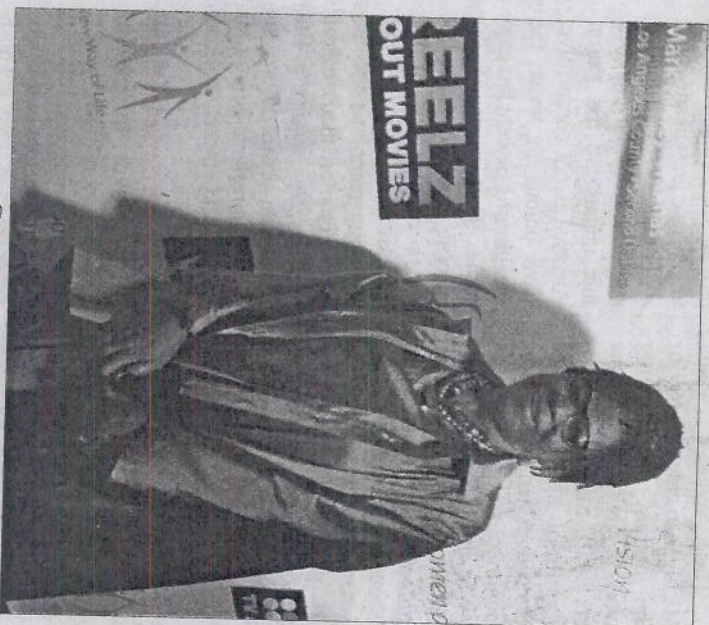
Woodard

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Woodard was staying at the 6 Columbus Hotel a block away from the shooting. This area, near Central Park, is so secure that some

A FULL TEXT OF THE FAMILY'S STATEMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:

"There are no words to describe our shock, grief, and



SUSAN BURTON

inspired by the works of A New Way of Life and all of the women involved.

"I think that it's a great cause. These women get out of whatever situation they're in, serve their time and they come out and prove that they can better themselves and influence other people to better themselves. I'm behind that a billion percent," he said.

Isaacs was the host for the evening and says that ever since meeting Burton, his thoughts on incarceration have forever changed.

"So many people I know aren't aware that if you come out of prison with a drug conviction in many states, California in particular you're banned from the federal government and

and Tessa Blake. A preview of the film was played during the gala, showing interviews with some of the women of A New Way of Life on their struggles and how they are overcoming adversity. Both Hewitt and Blake said making the film opened their eyes to the criminal justice system.

"We felt very strongly about the issue of mass incarceration in this country and the hurdles people face when they come out. The story has not been told. We wanted people to know how hard it is to stay out of prison once you've been in. The odds are overwhelming, that if you go to prison this year, you'll be back next year."

The entire film can be found on their YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/wigs.

The gala continued to praise those women who have bettered themselves, and presented more awards to persons who have made a contribution to A New Way of Life. The Community Partner award was given to Ferris and Mildred Harper who are active in the community through the NAACP, feeding the homeless for 20 years, their local church and educational programs. After learning about A New Way of Life over a decade ago, they became inspired by the work of Burton and they contributed by giving them a check every first of the month.

Valderrama presented the next award after adding how important it was to donate to such a good cause.

"It's moments like these, donating for right causes, that not only makes us feel human, but a part of something bigger," he said.

Following his speech, he presented the Community Champion Award to UCLA School of Law for their Critical Race Studies Program, which has been in partnership with A New Way of Life for five years. They hold a reentry legal clinic on the second Saturday each month to help people "expunge" their records, which can help with employment rights.

The Women's Foundation of California's Race, Gender and Human Rights Donor Circle became a grant partner with A New Way of Life and helped by donating money and contribu-

annual fundraising gala for her nonprofit A New Way of Life.

Those words would serve as motivational fuel for Burton, who started the non-profit that would change the lives of over 600 formerly incarcerated women. Burton's own experience with incarceration started with tragedy. She lost her 5-year old son, when he was hit and killed accidentally by a car. Grieving from the loss, she became addicted to drugs and alcohol and went to prison. When she was released from prison she soon realized that she had no support from her community of South L.A. After being given what Burton calls "boots" from two helpful women, she was able to "walk" on a new path of sobriety and freedom. She now works to give other formerly incarcerated women the "boots" they need to start their life over.

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Woodard

{Continued From A-4}

Woodard was staying at the 6 Columbus Hotel a block away from the shooting. This area, near Central Park, is so secure that some of the witnesses didn't even suspect that the event was a shooting.

"I'm thinking it was a tire popping," said Security Guard Jose Villafane. Even though Woodard seemed to have his life on a positive track, he had many altercations with the law, including charges for cocaine possession and a hit-and-run. In 2009 he was arrested for stealing bottles of wine and was facing an assault and battery charge from June 2012.

The motive behind the shooting is unknown, but police continue to investigate.

A FULL TEXT OF THE FAMILY'S STATEMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:

"There are no words to express our shock in the face of this horrendous tragedy. Brandon was a Los Angeles native. He attended Campbell Hall High School, graduated from Loyola Marymount University and was presently enrolled in West Los Angeles Law School. He was a kind, gentle, and generous young man, beloved by friends, family and his community. He enjoyed spending time with his four year old daughter, Kirsten and was a devoted father and son. We eagerly await justice for Brandon. Our family requests solace and privacy at this difficult time."

The Family of Brandon Lincoln Woodard.



SUSAN BURTON

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Isaacs was the host for the evening and says that ever since meeting Burton, his thoughts on incarceration have forever changed.

"So many people I know aren't aware that if you come out of prison with a drug conviction in many states, California in particular, you're banned from the federal system for the rest of your life. You won't get food stamps ever. You won't get welfare. You won't be allowed to sleep in public housing. It's designed to stop you from getting back on your feet and it's the reason why most people end up going back to prison because it's impossible to break the cycle," Isaacs said.

Stacey Johnson was one of those women who was able to "break the cycle." Johnson wrote Burton a letter after receiving advice from a counselor while in prison and was accepted into the program. She says after being released from prison in August 2012, she went straight to A New Way of Life and became a resident.

"My only advice would be if you are ready to change your life, a place like 'A New Way of Life' is a place to start. You can't lose going there. They have all the resources, support groups and even help with clothing and education," she said.

Johnson received this year's "Resident Award" at the gala as Burton emotionally congratulated her for her strength and tenacity. Johnson says that she had "no idea what she was walking into," but since becoming a resident she is now in school studying to be a dental assistant.

Johnson is also featured in a documentary film titled "Susan" made by critically acclaimed directors, Emma Hewitt

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The Women's Foundation of California's Race, Gender and Human Rights Donor Circle became a grant partner with A New Way of Life and helped by donating money and contributing strategic plans. They were given the Synergy Teamwork Award for their contributions. Actor, Tony Denison presented the Movement Builder Award to Dorsey Nunn who is the executive director of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. Nunn provided a moving speech while receiving his award.

"I ask you how much would you pay for your right as a woman? I wonder how much you would pay for your rights as a black person because freedom in America ain't free," he said. The gala ended with a raffle and a silent auction. Burton gave her final speech of the night acknowledging A New Way of Life's growth, but also what she continues to do within the non-profit.

"The women here in the back row, we're going to push them to the front," she said.

That's exactly what A New Way of Life continues to do. According to Burton, women who have been incarcerated are dropped off on Downtown Skid Row with no money, ID or social security card. By becoming residents, these women get the opportunity to get to the front of opportunities to better their lives and better the community. Currently, the success rate is at seventy-eight percent (78%) and Burton hopes to continue making positive impacts in the lives of many more women to come.